



# S-1 Who are you really talking to?

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## Key messages

- Talking to people online is great – it’s interesting and you can learn a lot about different people, subjects and places
- But it’s easy for people to pretend to be someone else online – so take some time to figure out who you’re really talking to
- Be careful about the “friend” invitations that you accept. If you know the person well, that’s one thing, but if invitations come from a stranger get some advice before accepting
- If someone makes you feel uncomfortable, it’s ok to ignore them. Don’t worry that ignoring them might seem rude – it’s more important to be safe!
- Talk straight away to someone you trust if a stranger is asking to meet up with you, or if someone is making you uncomfortable

## Illustrating the topic

- Miriam enjoyed talking to her new friend, Mark on the chat app ‘Touch’. They had a lot in common – Mark was the same age, had the same interests, and said nice things about Miriam’s photographs. When Mark suggested meeting up after school one day, because he had a present for her, Miriam was pleased. When Miriam arrived, though, she saw an adult man waiting where Mark had said he would be.

## Discussion questions

- Discuss the story. What are some explanations for what has happened? (from the innocent to the dangerous). What should Miriam do?
- Should she have agreed to the meeting in the first place? Are there ways to make it safe to meet up with people whom you don’t know?
- Who do you talk to online?
- What would you do if someone started flattering you, asking you to do something you are uncomfortable with, asking to meet you, asking for lots of information about yourself like your address, phone number, age, the school you go to, bank details or passwords
- Who can you turn to for advice if someone’s making you uncomfortable online?

- Who do our parents talk to? How do they keep themselves safe?
- Do you have to accept every invitation to be someone's friend, or request to be your friend? If you say no, what will the other person think of you? (and does it matter...)
- What are some of the ways you can check whether an invitation comes from one of your real friends, not a stranger?

## Activities

- Role play the story, exploring different ways of keeping safe
- Invite the local police to talk to class, syndicate or school about stranger-danger online
- Set up a fake identity and see how many children automatically accept you as a friend. Use this to illustrate that it's easy to pretend to be someone else online.

## Resources

Great tips from the Canadian Privacy Commissioner - Be selective, be cautious, be a sleuth:  
[http://www.priv.gc.ca/youth-jeunes/fs-fi/friend-ami\\_e.asp](http://www.priv.gc.ca/youth-jeunes/fs-fi/friend-ami_e.asp)

ThinkUKnow: <http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/> (material grouped for different ages)

Advice for parents on helping kids to say safe online:

[www.netsafe.org.nz/keeping\\_safe.php?pageID=126&sectionID=parents&menuID=112](http://www.netsafe.org.nz/keeping_safe.php?pageID=126&sectionID=parents&menuID=112)

Cybersafety advice for parents: <http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/Parents.aspx>